

JBSA

LEGACY

WWW.JBSA.MIL

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO

APRIL 1, 2022



JOSE E. RODRIGUEZ

At the Warrior Skills Task lane, Staff Sgt. Lawrence Attwood (right), a 68P Radiology Specialist Instructor assigned to the 264th Medical Battalion, demonstrates how to set up a Tactical Manpack Radio to Expert Field Medical Badge candidates Spc. Paulo Dasilva and Spc. Erick Rodriguez, both assigned to the the U.S. Army Medical Department Activity at Fort Carson, Colorado.

## MEDCoE Expert Field Medical Badge test event takes place at JBSA-Camp Bullis

Page 6



**AFSFC transforms Defender readiness with realistic training curriculum**

Page 15



**Air Force plans demos, performances for Air Force Day at the Alamo April 4**

Page 18

# Army offers to pay off student loans for new recruits

By Capt. Mia Figgs

U.S. ARMY RECRUITING COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The U.S. Army offers a special incentive to qualified applicants, guaranteeing up to \$65,000 in student loan repayment for previously earned education.

The program is available for nearly 50 different occupations covering full-time and part-time careers in the U.S. Army and Army Reserve.

The total amount of the loan reimbursement varies depending on the individual's initial enlistment contract length.

"Many people start college but will get steered into a different direction because life happens," said Maj. Gen. Kevin Vereen, who leads the U.S. Army Recruiting Command. "When those life changes happen, many decide to change their educational pursuit's right along with it. This is an opportunity for Americans to have some extra padding and use the

Army as a means to recover financially through its educational benefits."

There are various eligibility requirements. Applicants must have a high school diploma and a score of 50 or greater on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, must select from the list of critical professions, which changes quarterly. Individuals must also agree to an initial service obligation of five years or more in order to receive the benefit.

At the time of enlistment, the applicant's loans must be up-to-date and in good standing. The loans cannot be in default before or throughout the Soldier's repayment process.

All applicants must have incurred their student loan debt before enlisting into the Future Soldier Training Program.

Exactly how much will the Army pay? The principal and interest must not exceed 33 and 1/3 percent of the maximum amount of the Soldier's total loan (up to \$65,000) or \$1,500.00,

whichever is greater for each year of service.

Some of the occupations currently available through the student loan reimbursement program include:

- » Psychological operations specialist (37F), specialize in creating information used to directly influence and engage audiences.
- » Mortuary affairs specialist (92M), responsible for handling the remains and personal effects of fallen Soldiers.
- » Transportation management coordinator (88N), globally plans and oversees the transportation of supplies, equipment and personnel.
- » Shower & laundry specialist (92S), responsible for the care of personnel laundry and overseeing shower operations.

The student loan repayment incentive is not available to those already serving in the Army.

Individuals can learn more about Army career options and the benefits of military service at [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com).

## JBSA LEGACY

### Joint Base San Antonio Editorial Staff

#### 502nd Air Base Wing and JBSA Commander

BRIG. GEN.

CAROLINE M. MILLER

#### 502nd ABW/JBSA Public Affairs Director

LT. COL. GINA "FLASH" McKEEN

#### Editor

STEVE ELLIOTT

#### Staff

LORI BULTMAN

DAVID DEKUNDER

JASON WILKINSON

SENIOR AIRMAN

TYLER MCQUISTON

#### JBSA LEGACY

ADVERTISEMENT OFFICE

EN COMMUNITIES

P.O. BOX 2171

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78297

210-250-2052

This Department of Defense newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the DoD. Contents of the JBSA Legacy are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the DoD, or the U.S. Air Force.

Published by EN Communities a private firm in no way connected with the U.S. Air Force under exclusive written contract with the 502d Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the 502d Air Base Wing Public Affairs Office.

Everything advertised in this publication will be made available for purchase, use, or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any non-merit factor of the purchaser, user, or patron.

## U.S. Army adds Hawaii, Germany as guaranteed duty station choices for new recruits

### U.S. Army Recruiting Command Public Affairs

The U.S. Army has added Hawaii and Germany to the list of guaranteed assignment locations for 16 different occupations.

These often sought-after duty stations are now an option for new enlistees for about 1,500 vacancies for careers like infantry, wheeled vehicle mechanic, motor transport operator and military police.

These locations have been added to the previously announced list of locations available as part of the duty station of choice enlistment option, which included Fort Carson, Colorado; Joint Base Lewis-McCord, Washington; Fort Bliss and Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Polk, Louisiana; Fort Riley, Kansas; Fort Stewart, Georgia; Fort Drum, New York; and installations in Alaska. These locations are options for more than 5,000 vacancies.

"The Army understands that having the option to stay closer to home and loved ones is a big deal, and it's taking steps to make the decision easier on applicants," said Brig. Gen. John Cushing, the deputy commanding general for operations at U.S. Army Recruiting Command.

Many applicants have the opportunity to use this enlistment option and combine it with other available incentives, which could mean up to \$50,000 in bonuses or up to \$65,000 in student loan repayment.

Individuals can learn more about Army career options and the benefits of military service at [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com).



CAPT. ADAN CAZAREZ

*Soldiers with the Sensor Management Cell assigned to the 94th Army Air and Missile Defense Command, perform a tactical beach road march on Bellows Air Force Station, Waimanalo, Hawaii, on March 27, 2018. The U.S. Army has added Hawaii and Germany to the list of guaranteed assignment locations for 16 different occupations.*



# Feedback Fridays

Brig. Gen. Caroline M. Miller

502D AIR BASE WING AND JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO COMMANDER

Feedback Fridays is a weekly forum that aims to connect the 502d Air Base Wing with members of the Joint Base San Antonio community. Questions are collected during commander's calls, town hall meetings and throughout the week.

If you have a question or concern, please send an email to 502ABW.PA.official@us.af.mil com using the subject line "Feedback Fridays."

Questions will be further researched and published as information becomes available.

**Q: The white bollards in use at the JBSA-Lackland gates are very hard to see in the daytime and even worse in the dark.**

**Is there anything that can be done to increase their visibility? Thank you very much.**

**A:** Thank you for sharing your concerns with us through Feedback Friday. We appreciate your willingness to bring this to our attention.

While all of our traffic control devices are appropriately marked according to applicable regulations, we will address your concern as an opportunity to review how we may better highlight and/or alert drivers.

Thank you for your time and attention on this matter.



COURTESY GRAPHIC

## Getting TRICARE coverage for your new child

### By TRICARE Communications

Welcoming a new child into the family is a joyous event. But there's also much to do, and much to learn, especially for first-time parents. How will you handle your new child's health care coverage? As a TRICARE beneficiary, what's the best way to extend your coverage to your baby?

"Finding the right health care coverage for your newborn is a critical first step," said Shane Pham, program analyst with TRICARE Health Plan's Policy and Programs Section at the Defense Health Agency. "Your newborn will be taking many trips to the doctor in that first year. You want to make sure that those doctor trips, as well as prescriptions and other health care concerns, are covered by the right plan."

You likely have many questions about how to set up TRICARE coverage for your child. Here are answers to some frequently asked questions from new parents.

### Q: What is the first step?

**A:** The first step to getting TRICARE coverage is to register your child in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). This also applies if you adopt or have a child placed in your home by court appointment. DEERS registration ensures that your child can

use TRICARE. Keep in mind, there's only a 90-day window from your child's birth or placement to register in DEERS for stateside beneficiaries (120 days for overseas beneficiaries).

How do you register your child in DEERS? You'll need to visit a Uniformed Services ID card office. Remember to bring your child's birth certificate, proof of adoption, or letter of placement. You don't need to wait for your child to receive a Social Security number, just remember to update your child's DEERS record once he or she receives a Social Security number.

### Q: What is the second step I need to take?

**A:** After you register your child in DEERS, you need to enroll them in a TRICARE health plan. Enrollment in a TRICARE health plan is needed to be covered by TRICARE.

For some, enrollment might be automatic, depending on your status and where you live. In most cases, for stateside active duty families:

Your child is automatically enrolled in TRICARE Prime if living in a Prime Service Area (PSA).

If living outside of a PSA, your child is automatically enrolled in TRICARE Select.

You have 90 days to change your child's enrollment to a different

TRICARE health plan.

As stated in the TRICARE Maternity Care Brochure, the date of your child's birth, adoption, or placement by the court is a Qualifying Life Event (QLE). This opens a window for you to add or make changes to your own TRICARE coverage. Stateside sponsors have 90 days from the QLE to register their child in DEERS.

### Q: What if I don't register my child in DEERS in time?

**A:** If you miss the window to register your child in DEERS, you'll have to wait for another QLE or for the annual TRICARE Open Season. Once an active duty family enrolls their child, TRICARE coverage is backdated to the child's date of birth or placement. If you're late registering your child in DEERS, your child will only be able to get care at a military hospital or clinic during that time, if space is available. You'll be responsible for the full cost of medical treatment during this time.

### Q: What if we're living overseas?

**A:** Overseas sponsors have 120 days to register their child in DEERS. After you register, your child is automatically enrolled in TRICARE Select Overseas. Be sure your address in DEERS shows as overseas for automatic enrollment to

work. You have 90 days to change or transfer your child's enrollment to TRICARE Prime Overseas or TRICARE Prime Remote Overseas, as long as the child is eligible and command-sponsored. If you change enrollment, your child's coverage will still be backdated to the date of birth or placement.

### Q: Are the rules different for retirees?

**A:** Yes. There is no automatic enrollment for your child if you're a retiree. Also, there is no backdating your child's TRICARE coverage if you miss the deadline to register in DEERS. Keep that in mind, and don't forget to register your child in DEERS before the deadline. You're also responsible for all costs from day 91 (or 121 if overseas) until you enroll your child in a TRICARE health plan.

Once you enroll your child, make sure you learn about all the benefits of your TRICARE plan. TRICARE covers well-child care from birth through age 5. This includes routine services, like newborn care, vaccinations, and more.

For more information on how you get coverage for your newborn child, check out the TRICARE Maternity Care Brochure and Giving Birth or Adopting page. If you have any questions or concerns, be sure to contact your TRICARE regional contractor.

# DOD works to increase meaningful participation of women in security, defense institutions

By Terri Moon Cronk

DOD NEWS

On the occasion of Women's History Month, Michelle Strucke, deputy assistant secretary of defense for global security, spoke on the Participation Of Women in Security and Defense Institutions at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies March 10.

"Before I dive into the benefits and challenges of incorporating diverse perspectives into our national security decision making, I'd like to highlight our Women, Peace and Security program, where much of our work to advance gender equity and equality is centered," she said.

In 2020, the Department of Defense released its first Women, Peace and Security Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan, also known as the SFIP, which was a critical step in promoting the meaningful inclusion of women across the spectrum of conflict, Strucke said.

The SFIP outlines the department's internal and external focus areas for the next four years, including, she said:

- Modeling WPS within DOD through its development, management and employment of the Joint Force;
- Supporting DOD's partner nations to advance women's meaningful participation in their defense and security sectors; and
- Working with partner nation defense and security sectors to ensure women and girls are safe and secure, and that their human rights are protected.

"For the DOD, the benefits to integrating a gender perspective into our defense institutions are clear," the deputy assistant secretary said. "By empowering women in defense and security sectors, the department, alongside its partners and allies, believes we can more effectively achieve our mutual security objectives."

Put simply, she noted, advancing WPS is not just about doing the right thing — it also translates to strategic, operational and tactical gains, making the DOD a more effective force.

The DOD is committed to working with its partners long-term on increasing the meaningful participation



COURTESY PHOTO

U.S. Air Force Gen. Lori J. Robinson walks through a joint service sideboys at the beginning of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command during the change of command ceremonies, May 13, 2016, at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado.

of women in national security and elevating the unique perspectives and security needs of not just women and girls, but men, boys and differently gendered people in conflict, Strucke said.

"Alongside our partners and allies, the DOD has made a tremendous amount of progress on WPS implementation over the last few decades, and we view WPS principles as integral to advancing prosperity and security in the Western Hemisphere."

Strucke said she's "encouraged by the progress some of our Latin American partners have made in ensuring the meaningful participation of women in their security and defense sectors."

Yet, she added, "We know that challenges remain. Recent reports commissioned by U.S. Southern Command on the status of women in Latin American and Caribbean security and defense sectors highlighted that — despite strong rhetoric and political support for gender equity and equality — WPS principles have not been consistently applied, and lack strong monitoring and evaluation structures."

And while achieving gender balance is a key first step, advancing true gender equity and equality requires

more: integrating a gender perspective throughout policies and plans, and addressing gender norms in the security and defense sectors that serve as barriers to recruitment, promotion and retention, Strucke said.

"We're continually working to recruit, promote and retain women throughout the Joint Force," she emphasized. "As of 2021, less than 20% of senior enlisted personnel were women, and women make up less than 25% of our Airmen, Soldiers, Marines and Sailors. These discrepancies are the most prominent at senior levels as we work to retain women as they progress in their careers."

Strucke noted that more than half of female officers from 2001 to 2019 left military service after their initial obligation, compared to 33% of men in the same positions.

"This requires a dismantling of the systematic and structural barriers in place by supporting military families, improving access to childcare, creating clear pathways to leadership and addressing gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and assault," she said.

"It also requires us to recognize the intersectionality between recruiting, promoting and retaining women, and

**"For the DOD, the benefits to integrating a gender perspective into our defense institutions are clear. By empowering women in defense and security sectors, the department, alongside its partners and allies, believes we can more effectively achieve our mutual security objectives."**

Michelle Strucke, deputy assistant secretary of defense for global security

our broader diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility work," the deputy assistant secretary said.

"My colleagues in the Office of Personnel and Readiness, as well as senior advisors to Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III, have done an excellent job of integrating gender into our efforts to address extremism, ensure that LGBTQI+ people are able to serve freely and openly, and work towards a joint force that reflects America's diversity," Strucke said.

The DOD also is continually getting better at integrating gender analysis and a gender perspective into its policies and plans, she said, adding that means shifting the way the U.S. military has traditionally thought about its engagements abroad, incorporating factors like gender into conversations around priorities like strategic competition, climate change and response to emerging crises.

"I am proud that our department has not only prioritized advancing the careers of women in leadership — as you've seen through the nomination of women to two of our four-star combatant commands," Strucke noted. "We've also prioritized establishing an environment where every person is an ambassador for advancing gender, racial and LGBTQIA+ equity across this department and advanced an intersectional approach in our actions with partners abroad."

# CSAF: Taking care of installations takes care of mission, Airmen

By 1st Lt. Amber R. Kelly-Herard  
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

“National security affects us all — we’re in this together,” was the resounding message of the 2022 Association of Defense Communities’ National Defense Summit March 8.

The annual event brings together senior Defense Department leaders, community leaders, and Congressional members to advance issues that build strong communities and support the military, including infrastructure, climate, housing, cost of living, education, spouse employment, child care and resiliency.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. CQ Brown Jr. was a keynote speaker at the summit, where he discussed the importance of collaboration between stakeholders.

“One of the things I did when I came in was writing Accelerate Change or Lose. There was a key word I put in there, and I put it in for a purpose — collaboration. The things we do, we cannot do by ourselves,” Brown said.

Recent examples of how Air Force and community leaders, with support from Congress, identified opportunities to modify installations to better align with the Air Force’s future design include preparations for the bed down of four new missions at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, as the Air Force begins to divest Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar Systems, and approval for construction and renovation projects at Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota, to enable the wing to develop and train crews in support of future intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions.

Brown explained that while challenges vary from location to location, the Air Force welcomes opportunities to enhance mission readiness and increase the quality of life for Airmen and families through partnerships with local communities.

Fairchild Air Force Base, Washington, for example, signed a 10-year intergovernmental support agreement with Spokane to establish a joint-use, small-arms range and tactical training facility, while Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma, partnered with the city there to enable rezoning and a public-private housing solution

just outside of the base to resolve a critical housing issue.

Brown also stressed the need for predictable funding to ensure a successful infrastructure strategy and action plans.

When asked how Congress can assist the Air Force in achieving its infrastructure strategy, Brown responded, “Give us a budget.”

“Continuing resolutions are bad,” he continued. “In the past decade, we’ve only delivered one budget on time. It’s been three years over the past 10 years we’ve been in continuing resolutions. We’re trying to accelerate change. When we cannot move forward and do things, we lose the trust and confidence of our Airmen and their families and our industry partners.”

Brown also discussed the need to create resilient installations to overcome future challenges arising from conflict and climate-related disasters, noting Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, is the primary testing ground for Department of the Air Force Installations of the Future.

Edwin Oshiba, acting assistant secretary of the Air Force for energy, installations, and environment, who also spoke at the summit, likewise noted Air Force’s efforts to develop adaptation strategies for existing infrastructure and increase the resiliency of newly built infrastructure to account for climate changes.

“In the face of a changing climate, the mission does not change: to fight and win the nation’s wars,” Oshiba said. “The DAF’s priority is to enhance our capabilities and increase resiliency, which have the added benefit of reducing our climate footprint.”

Sharene Brown, spouse of Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. CQ Brown Jr., also spoke at the event to highlight the top five quality of life issues facing military families and how communities can assist.

She explained “Five and Thrive” aims to improve the quality of life for our military families in five focus areas: childcare, education, healthcare, housing and spouse employment. By highlighting preventative measures, promoting best practices, and fostering community partnerships in these five areas, we want to provide our military families with the best opportunities to thrive.



# FORT SAM HOUSTON

## MEDCoE Expert Field Medical Badge test event takes place at JBSA-Camp Bullis

**Jose E. Rodriguez**

U.S. ARMY MEDICAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Expert Field Medical Badge, commonly known as the EFMB, is one of the most rigorous and highly sought-after U.S. Army special skill badges. Of the many Soldiers that compete for the badge, only a few successfully obtain the EFMB.

The U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence, or MEDCoE, hosted a two-week EFMB event with 110 candidates testing for the badge, which began March 19 at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis, to ensure Soldiers are given the opportunity to earn the badge.

The EFMB event includes a standardization phase, during which candidates become familiar with the event lanes and tasks, followed by a testing phase, and ended with a graduation ceremony April 1.

MEDCoE, the proponent for the Army's EFMB Test Control Office, last hosted an EFMB event of their own in 2018. The COVID-19 pandemic delayed MEDCoE's own testing schedule, and this year's event signifies return to normalcy.

The EFMB Test Control Office travels to various test sites across the United States to standardize other unit EFMB test events even during the pandemic, though with less frequency.

Command Sgt. Maj. Clark Charpentier, MEDCoE Command Sergeant Major, who was very active in reenergizing the MEDCoE EFMB test program, frequently visited the test site during all phases of planning, and continues to oversee the execution of the event.

"The Expert Field Medical Badge is the portrait of excellence for field medicine in the Army," Charpentier said.

The test includes tactical casualty care, land navigation, a physical fitness assessment and other assessments to



JOSE E. RODRIGUEZ

*At the Warrior Skills Task lane, Staff Sgt. Lawrence Attwood (right), a 68P Radiology Specialist Instructor assigned to the 264th Medical Battalion, demonstrates how to set up a Tactical Manpack Radio to Expert Field Medical Badge candidates Spc. Paulo Dasilva and Spc. Erick Rodriguez, both assigned to the U.S. Army Medical Department Activity at Fort Carson, Colorado.*

determine the candidate's medical and Soldier skill level.

"The candidates that prepare themselves physically and mentally, those are the individuals that are generally successful out here in the testing site."

While the emphasis of Army events naturally focuses on the competing Soldiers and the difficulty of earning the badge, cadre and staff preparation is key to conducting a smooth testing event.

Successfully hosting a large event like the EFMB requires hundreds of

personnel; weeks of planning, logistics, equipment and supplies procurement; and the final lane setup and testing at JBSA-Camp Bullis.

As with other large competition and testing events, hosting an EFMB assessment event is a chance for the personnel to train and execute at all levels, ensuring Army preparedness for possible real-world operations. The staff at MEDCoE began planning last fall.

Sgt. 1st Class Junior Velazquez, assigned to Headquarters Company, 232nd Medical Battalion, served as

Section One noncommissioned officer in charge for the medical evacuation lane. Velazquez earned his EFMB in 2014 and has worked EFMB 11 times as cadre and evaluator.

"We've been blessed with all the support personnel coming out. We had to start all the lanes from scratch. We have full liberty to set up the lanes based on the guidelines from the EFMB tasks and skill," Velazquez said. "I've had more time and experience in the whole

**BADGE continues on 8**

# Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month: 'Step Forward. Prevent. Report. Advocate!'

**Suerjee Lee**

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO NAVY

SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE COORDINATOR

April is nationally recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, or SAAPM, which is designed to raise public awareness about sexual assault and to educate communities on how to prevent sexual violence. This year's theme is "Step Forward. Prevent. Report. Advocate!"

Joint Base San Antonio will also take part in recognizing Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, as local sexual assault response programs have planned a variety of events to highlight awareness, sexual assault impact, support for survivors and prevention of sexual assault.

Teal is the color representing SAAPM. All JBSA locations will have teal ribbons and flags or special teal lighting to demonstrate support to those JBSA survivors recovering from sexual assault.

Sexual assault awareness information will be distributed at various locations throughout April. Staff will share info about sexual assault realities, victim services and prevention tips.

Both programs provide support, resources and crisis prevention for members of our military community who have experienced sexual assault. These resources are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Their services are confidential, anonymous and secure.

To report a sexual assault, call the JBSA Sexual



TECH. SGT. HUGO DELGADO

*Air Force Brig. Gen. Caroline M. Miller, 502nd Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio commander, signs a proclamation for this year's Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month to educate military members and civilians the importance and power of intervention at JBSA.*

Assault Prevention and Response Hotline at 210-808-0110 or the Department of Defense Safe Helpline at 877-995-5247.

Joint Base San Antonio Sexual Assault

Awareness, Prevention Month events for April include:

## » Supporting Survivors with displays

Teal trees will be displayed in common areas around JBSA to help bring awareness to how many people are impacted by sexual violence.

Anyone impacted by sexual violence can display a ribbon to show support, awareness, and solidarity. Please write a name, inspirational quote, or reason for why you support those affected by sexual violence.

Ribbons are available at each Teal Tree Location or can be coordinated for drop off with your location's SARC. For more information, call the JBSA SHARP/SAPR team at 210-652-4386.

## » SAAPM Awareness table displays

The following locations offer information tables, awareness material and resources:

- » Brooke Army Medical Center: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays throughout April
- » JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Patch Shoppette: 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., April 15
- » JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Student Activity Center: 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., April 29
- » JBSA-Lackland Mini Shoppette (training side): 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., April 7, 14, 21, 29
- » JBSA-Randolph Exchange: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., April 22 and 29

## Army South hosts conference for Exercise Southern Vanguard 2024

**By Leanne Thomas**

U.S. ARMY SOUTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A concept development conference for Exercise Southern Vanguard 2024 took place with Brazilian Army planners at U.S. Army South Headquarters March 7-9, 2022.

Exercise Southern Vanguard is a U.S. Southern Command-sponsored, U.S. Army South-conducted exercise at the operational and tactical levels designed to increase interoperability between U.S. and Western Hemisphere forces.

Exercise Southern Vanguard 2024, which will occur in the Fall of 2023, is aimed at improving combined readiness between U.S. Army and Brazilian Army forces.

"During the concept development conference, we are laying out the framework for the exercise to identify the exact location, duration, and the specific units that will participate in the training," said Manuel Garces, Army South scenario planner G-7 Training and Exercises. "So we end up working together with the ultimate goal of interoperability, and we continue to maintain, and strengthen the

relationship between the U.S. and Brazil."

In December 2021, U.S. Army and Brazilian Army forces conducted Southern Vanguard 2022 in Lorena, São Paulo, Brazil, which was the largest U.S. element to conduct combined training with Brazil since World War II.

Brazilian Army Col. Alessandro Pinho, chief of the Brazilian Army Land Operations Command, said the main difference between the second iteration of Southern Vanguard is the change of environment.

"Southern Vanguard 22 was held in São Paulo, an urban environment, but the next one will be held in a jungle environment in the northern region of Brazil," Pinho said. "It will be more challenging for us and the U.S. Army to manage the exercise there, but it will also be very useful training."

Based on the complexity and scale of this operational exercise, planning takes place years in advance.

"I think both countries, the U.S. and Brazil, have main core values," Pinho said. "This kind of exercise is a good opportunity to improve our interoperability, our partnership, our friendship, and it is very useful for us to operate together in case of regional crisis and to solve regional problems."



JOSE SAEZ

*U.S. Army and Brazilian Army planners conduct a concept development conference for Exercise Southern Vanguard 2024 at U.S. Army South headquarters at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston March 7.*

Southern Vanguard is a rotating exercise that Army South conducts with partner nations in Central and South America. The next iteration, Exercise Southern Vanguard 2023, will take place in Colombia with U.S. Army and Colombian Army forces.



## BADGE

From page 6

process. It's more than you show up, do your 10 days, and then earn your badge. There's a lot of hard work and dedication that comes before the candidates even arrive."

"During standardization they have an opportunity to see how to perform the task," said Staff Sgt. Caleb Stinson, an Advanced Individual Training instructor assigned to the 232nd Medical Battalion.

Stinson has spent several weeks preparing the Medical Evacuation Lane and working with other cadre and AIT Soldiers detailed to assist during the EFMB. His role was to ensure the lane is ready when the Soldiers testing for the EFMB go through the standardization and testing phases. Stinson, who earned the EFMB in 2018, understands the difficulty of both the preparations and testing.

"During standardization, the detailed Soldiers have an opportunity to see how to perform the task," Stinson said. "For them, it's a chance to learn. Chances are they will be out here in the future as a candidate. Seeing the lanes and familiarizing themselves will help when it's their time to test for the EFMB. Being

out here also gives them an idea of what to expect when they get to their first unit after finishing AIT."

One of the detailed Soldiers is taking advantage of assisting during the EFMB.

"It's a real learning process," said Pvt. Lyhjon Leslie, assigned to Company A, 264th Medical Battalion, and training to become a 68F Physical Therapy Specialist. Leslie joined the Army in November 2021 and appreciates having the opportunity to see the NCOs conducting an event outside of the classroom.

"I will definitely be part of the EFMB process in the future," Leslie said. "I would say I'm one step closer right now. The sergeants are giving us great instruction. If you're willing to learn, you will learn. It's pretty fun."

The EFMB test measures the individual medical Soldier's physical fitness, mental toughness, and ability to perform to standards of excellence in a broad spectrum of critical medical and Soldier skills.

Earning the EFMB requires successful completion of a digital written test and all events during the testing period, which includes passing the physical fitness assessment, land navigation, testing lanes, the 12-mile road march, and the final event. Army units,

not just the MEDCoE, conduct EFMB testing as frequently as their operational tempo will allow.

During the testing event, Soldiers were shown skills they will be tested, taught the proper way to perform those skills, and were able to practice those skills before they are formally tested.

"The measure of success is that

individuals are out here and they are getting advanced training," Charpentier said. "Every single candidate that comes out here, emerges on the back side, as a better medic for the Army."

To learn more about the EFMB, or to schedule a unit test event, visit the MEDCoE website at <https://medcoe.army.mil/efmb>.



PHOTOS BY JOSE E. RODRIGUEZ

*During the Medical Evacuation Lane setup and validation, Staff Sgt. Caleb Stinson (rear right) oversees detailed Advanced Individual Training Soldiers move a simulated casualty to a field litter ambulance prior to the beginning of the MEDCoE Expert Field Medical Badge test event at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis.*



*Pvt. Lyhjon Leslie, an Advanced Individual Training Soldier assigned to Company A, 264th Medical Battalion, and training to become a 68F Physical Therapy Specialist, straps down a simulated casualty aboard a field litter ambulance with the help of other AIT Soldiers detailed to assist during the Medical Evacuation Lane validation portion of the MEDCoE Expert Field Medical Badge testing event at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis.*



# JBSA's Force Support Squadron employees benefit from minimum wage increase

By Lori A. Bultman

502ND AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Nearly 50,000 Department of Defense employees recently received good news. In January, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management announced that Federal civilian employees in the U.S. will now be paid at least \$15 per hour.

All of the affected DOD employees, including many who are military spouses, work for local, non-appropriated fund activities providing essential services to the military community.

"We know that paying a living wage provides a myriad of benefits, from recruitment to retention to increased productivity, and more," said Kiran Ahuja, Director of the Office of Personnel Management. "It's also the right thing to do."

At Joint Base San Antonio, the increase will make a big difference to employees and to those who use the services they provide.

"JBSA is a major employer in the local area — with an average of 1,200 employees in 502nd Force Support Squadron alone — ranging from military spouses, dependents, veterans and local community members," said Rebecca White, 502nd FSS Director. "Currently, our payroll is more than \$13 million. With this raise, it will be nearly \$18 million annually."

"This is a good news story for our employees and ultimately to our JBSA warfighters and their families," White added. "With appropriate salaries, we will be able to recruit and retain quality candidates, and in the area of 502nd FSS Morale, Welfare, and Recreation activities, we will be able to increase our programming and offerings due to higher staffing levels."

While leaders are excited to see employees benefit from the increase in pay, keep in mind that patrons may see a slight increase in fees and charges, which are set at local levels based on supply and labor costs. Child and Youth care fees and lodging rates are centrally established at headquarters levels.



COURTESY PHOTO

A 502nd Force Support Squadron Outdoor Recreation employee (right) shows rental equipment to a patron at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

"Our managers do their best to ensure we offer services and programs which beat almost any price off post," White said. "In some instances, we are currently less than 50% of comparable off-base or off-post businesses. We will continue to be lower than local business, but maybe not 50% below."

White noted that slight increases in fees will also contribute to the quality of services, equipment and events they offer to patrons.

"Did you know we use NAF funds to not only buy our refrigerators, ovens and dishes, but also to buy new golf carts, campers and trailers, and to give back to the community through base-wide events such as the holiday parade, Glow in the Park, Taste of JBSA, and Lakin' it Easy," she said.

The pay increase employees have received will not only help organizations continue to provide quality services and allow them to retain adequate staffing to support

military communities through recreation, child care, safety services, and other quality-of-life activities, it will also improve the quality of life for employees.

"We should strive for every federal job to be a good job, and we want to ensure that every federal employee has a pathway to the middle class," Ahuja said. "This pay increase is an important step for the civilian men and women who support the military community and their families."

# LACKLAND



PHOTOS BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS CHASE SULLIVAN

Matt Johnson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife fire management specialist, scans the perimeter of a prescribed burn at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, Jan. 28.

## AFCEC program combats increasing wildland fire risk

By Mollie Miller

AIR FORCE INSTALLATION AND MISSION  
SUPPORT CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

With the first flames of the 2022 wildfire season already appearing in places like Florida, California and Kansas, Air Force wildland fire teams nationwide are busy fighting fire with fire for continued mission success.

Prescribed burns, often described as the most important tool in managing fire-dependent ecosystems, are lighting up landscapes on and near Air Force installations from coast to coast. Under the watchful eyes of the Air Force Civil Engineer Center's Wildland Fire Branch, the fires are lit to reduce potential fuels like grass and other vegetation to ensure future wildfires don't turn catastrophic.

"The most important thing we do to protect Air Force installations and communities and allow missions to continue unimpeded is prescribed burning," said Brett Williams, Eglin Air Force Base Wildland Support Module lead. "We respond to 50 to 60 wildfires on Eglin every year and you rarely hear about these fires on the news because we have been so aggressive with our application of prescribed burns. When a

fire does start, it is easy to manage with no risk to the installation or the community."

AFCEC established the Wildland Fire Branch in 2012 to ensure an increasing wildfire threat does not impede the Air Force mission. The branch, headquartered at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, includes nearly 20 teams scattered across the country who are driven by a mission to secure military preparedness through wildfire threat mitigation.

The Wildland Fire Branch responds to hundreds of fires every year, said Bradley Shoemaker, branch chief. He said 2021 was an especially active wildfire season with 187 recorded fires on Air Force property. Those fires burned more than 56,000 acres, a number that could have been much higher without the use of wildfire threat mitigation tools like prescribed burns.

"The prescribed burn process applies fire to the landscape and creates resilient ecosystems that can withstand fire while also reducing the intensity of fires that burn in those areas, making them easier to suppress when we have an unwanted ignition," he said.

Predicting what the 2022 Wildfire Season might look like is one of the



Melcolm Crutchfield, U.S. Fish and Wildlife seasonal firefighter, begins a prescribed burn on Barksdale East Reservation, Louisiana, Jan. 28. Approximately 400 acres of Barksdale woods were part of the burn to help clear underbrush before warmer seasons bring increased risk of wildfires.

more difficult aspects of wildland fire management, Shoemaker said, because different ecosystems and rapidly changing conditions can alter the course of the season in a matter of moments.

Although the future remains a bit unknown, the chief said off-season burns have put suppression resources

including Fire and Emergency Services and his teams in a good place to respond and control whatever the 2022 Wildfire Season brings.

"Prescribed burning is the best tool we have to create sustainable lands while reducing the unavoidable threat of wildfires," he said.



# Do you see me? Chief's 'true colors' impart wisdom, enhance understanding

By Christa D'Andrea

37TH TRAINING WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

She grew up in a small town 45 minutes west of St. Louis. Lost her mom at the age of 13 to a drunk driver. Raised her younger sister. Then, at the age of 18, decided it was time to leave the double-wide home in the country.

When Nicole Hicks set out on her adventure to San Antonio in an old Ford Mustang, she had no idea what was in store. She just knew she wanted more.

"I was so tired of not being able to be who I wanted to be and I knew there was more," she said. "Moving to San Antonio was exciting. For me it was freedom."

Hicks, from Pacific, Missouri, didn't grow up with much. She said the trailer they lived in had holes in the floor and they ate squirrel and rice for dinner. "It was just the way it was."

Hicks, a self-proclaimed "Mariah Carey fiend in the '90s" is biracial — half black, half white.

"I remember seeing Mariah Carey for the first time ... because you know representation matters and I can sing. So just seeing her hair and everything that she was and that she is biracial meant a lot to me," Hicks said.

She added that it "was the coolest thing" to see someone who is also fair-toned, be so successful.

But it was the adventure to San Antonio that would start Hicks out on her own path to success.

Today, Chief Master Sgt. Nicole Hicks is the Senior Enlisted Leader for the 324th Training Squadron at Basic Military Training.

Hicks joined the Air Force in 1999, inspired, in part, by her cousin who had joined the Air Force.

"I remember seeing her come home and she had a new car," the chief described. "To come out of East St. Louis and to make something of yourself is a big deal. I just remember thinking ... if she can do that, I can do that."

Hicks' father didn't approve of her joining at first. In fact, his answer to her desire to join any branch of service was, "absolutely not."

Hicks explained that her father had a "very different perspective." He had said she couldn't join any of the military branches because of racial discrimination he felt would occur. He was adamant that she should not serve a country "that doesn't serve you."

Hicks, now a mother of two, started off her career at the 39th Training Squadron at BMT where she was assigned as a personnelist.

Her perspective now is to always try and "really see people, not judge them by what they look like." She strives to always help people understand that someone's appearance doesn't dictate who they are.

It's a message as a female leader in the Air Force she wants others to hear.

"We need to be aware of our own biases," she said. "We need to try and remove that bias and micro-



JOSEPH GANGEMI

*Chief Master Sgt. Nicole Hicks is the senior enlisted leader for the 324th Training Squadron at Basic Military Training, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland. Hicks, who is bi-racial, grew up in Pacific, Missouri.*

aggression to understand. Understanding one another is important."

In 2020, following the death of George Floyd, Hicks was feeling a range of emotions. So, she picked up a pen and started writing a poem about her own life experiences. The words naturally flowed:

*Do you see me?  
My 'true color' affords me to see your 'true colors.'  
Do you see me?  
Depends on the viewer ...  
depends on the brown paper bag test.  
Do you see me?  
My privilege, my un-colored privilege.*

*Do you see me?*

*As you followed my 'black' husband around  
in the store ... and you allowed me to peruse freely.*

Hicks' 22-stanza poem describes aspects of the various experiences she has had throughout her life where she had been judged by the color of her skin.

*Do you see me?*

*As you ask me to prove my background  
with photos of 'my people.'*

*Do you see me?*

*When you told me I could not run the squadron  
black history month committee because  
I didn't 'look the part.'*

Assumptions have been made. Comments have been voiced. Questions have been asked.

She has had people ask if they could touch her hair ... simply because they wanted to know what black hair felt like. She's been told she sounded white, but asked "Do you feel black?"

Her perspective? "If it [comments and questions] sparks a conversation to raise awareness and understanding ... let's talk about it. I know that my walk is different than someone else who is darker than I am. I know that I can pass as white," she added. "I want to be able to provide someone a safe platform to be able to ask me any question. I want you to ask me. That doesn't mean every person feels that way as trying to navigate what's appropriate to ask and what's not is hard."

According to Hicks, the Air Force is headed in the right direction in being able to provide safe platforms to have tough conversations and ask questions.

Time and experience have taught the chief how to take advantage of opportunities to help people become more culturally aware and to educate them on what's appropriate and what isn't.

"Sometimes people just don't know," she said.

Married to a fellow Air Force chief master sergeant, Hicks says "the Air Force has been very good to me. Now I've had a lot of experiences in the Air Force that weren't good but holistically the Air Force has just been phenomenal."

Her advice to fellow Airmen? "Find the courage within yourself to ask the questions you wouldn't normally ask ... asking questions helps open perspectives. Also, remember that our approach matters. How you ask matters. The approach is the power behind your content."

*Do you see me?*

*My racially ambiguous appearance.*

*My invisibly obvious blackness.*

*See me for me.*

*See you for you.*

*See us for us.*

# 6 things you should know about JBSA-Lackland's CGO Council

By Miriam Thurber

37TH TRAINING WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The JBSA-Lackland Company Grade Officer Council invites every lieutenant and captain (O1-O3) to become an active member. The CGOC, a private organization operating outside the chain of command, provides opportunities for networking, growth and unique encounters with the mission.

"Come out and try it," said 1st Lt. Braden Evers, CGOC vice president. "Initially, I wasn't eager to join, especially since I'm so busy, but I'm so thankful that I did. The events have been great for growing as a leader and even just relaxing among peers."

Whether you're already a member or have never heard of them, here are six things you should know about the council.

**1. Attendance opens doors.** "These are the people we're going to grow with," said 1st Lt. Himanshu Chopra, CGOC president. "It's no secret that networking now pays off in the future."

**2. Members get backstage passes.** Every month, JBSA-Lackland's CGOC sponsors a behind-the-scenes tour of a unit. In February, the 341st Training Squadron hosted an up-close look at the military working dog program's only training squadron in the Department of Defense, giving the 30



1ST LT. BRADEN EVERS

Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland's Company Grade Officer Council visits the 341st Training Squadron for an in-depth look at military working dog detection training and bite work Feb. 22. The CGOC provides opportunities every month for members to network, grow and experience unique encounters with the mission.

CGOs in attendance front row seats to detection training and bite work practice. The CGOs also spoke directly to experts about the squadron's breeding, whelping and fostering programs while walking through the kennels. In April, members will take an in-depth tour of the Special Warfare

Training Wing.

**3. The CGOC hosts three events every month.** In addition to the unit tours, the CGOC also hosts one social and one meeting each month. "The goal is to build up our members, and to improve the quality of life for our CGOs," Evers said. "We try to do

things that are fun and unique."

**4. They're hiring.** On March 23, CGOs from around the base will vote to include four new positions: CGOC Ambassador, Special Events Officer, Communications Officer and Community Outreach Officer. To learn more about the positions, or to throw your hat in the ring, be sure to attend the member meeting on March 23.

**5. Col. Joyce Storm, commander of the 37th Training Group, will be your mentor.** As the senior mentor for the CGOC, Storm provides insight on how to grow both personally and professionally as an officer. Attendees of the March 23 general membership meeting will get to hear her speak on professional development and the importance of expanding horizons.

**6. You may already be a member.** Technically, all second lieutenants, first lieutenants and captains are automatically members of the council and can vote on policies, activities and leadership. CGOs who want to become more active in the council can simply attend an event alongside their 1,600 active peers.

The CGOC continuously plans events, coordinates socials and offers opportunities for community engagement. For more information about upcoming events or the CGOC in general, visit the JBSA-Lackland CGOC on Facebook.

## 149TH MAINTENANCE SQUADRON GUNFIGHTERS GRIND METAL, KEEP AIRCRAFT FLYING



Staff Sgt. Josh Turner, 149th Maintenance Squadron aircraft metals technician, Air National Guard, performs precision grinding to remove corrosion deposits on a piece of aluminum during night operations in February. These technicians play a crucial role in how aircraft function when they weld, fabricate and custom-make its metal components.

MASTER SGT. MINDY BLOEM



# 960th Cyberspace Wing hosts Total Force additional-duty first sergeant symposium

By Kristian Carter

960 CYBERSPACE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The 960th Cyberspace Wing First Sergeants' Council organized and hosted a Total Force additional-duty first sergeant symposium at the Robert D. Gaylor NCO Academy at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland March 7-10.

The inaugural symposium offered training for 44 in-person and 11 virtual Reserve, Guard and active duty Airmen who, as additional-duty first sergeants, backfill and assist assigned first sergeants.

Unlike assigned first sergeants, additional-duty first sergeants do not attend the Air Force First Sergeant Academy, but still require the training to serve military members in their assigned units.

Master Sgt. Shatasha L. Estes, 960th CW first sergeant and symposium organization team lead, said the lessons, templates and slides used to build the schedule for the symposium came from the First Sergeant Academy curriculum.

"Part of the curriculum is the diamond-wearing shirts who brief the academy slides," said Estes. "It is also the various helping agencies briefing their programs and what they offer to take care of Airmen and their families."

Estes said this method provides quality training in the compressed schedule.

The symposium consisted of 31 briefings, along with commanders', chiefs' and first sergeants' panels, and periodic networking breaks for participants.

The additional-duty first sergeants also participated in an icebreaker dinner, a yoga session and volunteer community service landscaping work at the JBASA-Lackland Fisher House.

The symposium's coordinators said they wanted to hold a total-force focused event to develop well-rounded first sergeants and highlight the Reserve's operational mission-partner role.

As event planning progressed, the coordinators recruited first sergeants from all three components to help with the training.

"We wanted to create a presence on



A group of additional-duty first sergeants participate in a yoga session March 8 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

MASTER SGT. SHATASHA ESTES

base with the Reserve 433rd Airlift Wing and other organizations here at JBASA," said Estes. "It started as a Reserve symposium and then morphed into a Total Force event with Reserve, Guard and active duty members all involved."

Several of the briefings were led by a team of active duty and Reserve first sergeants. Estes said this enabled briefers to answer questions regarding a variety of issues, as service members and families from different components can have different types of challenges.

One of the participants, Tech. Sgt. Patricia Nentwich, 382nd Training Squadron medical laboratory apprentice instructor at JBASA-Fort Sam Houston and additional-duty first sergeant, said this training helped her to better understand the role and provide support to the assigned first sergeant in her unit.

"I really think the knowledge of this program will help me support our first sergeant," said Nentwich. "Being a first sergeant is a 24/7 gig, so having additional-duty first sergeants allows him to take time off. The first sergeant needs a break, too."

Nentwich said some of the most beneficial information was about discipline and the non-judicial punishment process.

"Regardless of whether they did something wrong, at the end of the day, you want to make sure they are good," she said.

Nentwich said the symposium helped her to identify the legal boundaries and the resources to appropriately take care of that person.

Symposium sessions covered a variety of topics. Many were about clear-cut procedures, while others, like mental health, counseling, and suicide

awareness and prevention, focused on developing soft skills and encouraged participants to use empathy when working with people.

A highlight was the discussion about emotional intelligence, according to Nentwich.

"The briefers showed a piece of themselves," she said. "That helped facilitate the program and enabled a deeper level of learning."

Tech. Sgt. Alicia Brown, 959th Inpatient Services Squadron neonatal intensive care unit flight chief at San Antonio Military Medical Center and additional-duty first sergeant, said she would like to become a first sergeant if other career aspirations do not occur.

"I have had great shirts and absent shirts," said Brown. "Having the opportunity to help people is our duty as a shirt. It is imperative for first sergeants to want to be in the position."



*Cadre from Desert Defender, the Air Force Security Forces Center's Det. 3, Ground Combat Readiness Training Center, participates in mounted operations involving multiple movements and formations during the initial validation phase of the Agile Combat Defender Course and Mission Focused Rehearsal Training at Fort Bliss, Texas.*

COURTESY PHOTOS

## AFSFC transforming Defender readiness with realistic training curriculum



*Security Forces members attending the first Agile Combat Defender Course at Air Force Security Forces Center's Det. 3, Desert Defender Ground Combat Readiness Training Center, participate in field training exercises Jan. 21 at Fort Bliss, Texas.*

**By Joe Bela**

AIR FORCE INSTALLATION AND MISSION  
SUPPORT CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Air Force Security Forces Center is transforming Defender readiness with two new courses designed to challenge security forces members with a more realistic representation of a deployed environment.

The Mission Focused Rehearsal Training and the Agile Combat Defender Course were first introduced to students in January at Desert Defender, AFSFC's Det. 3, Ground Combat Readiness Training Center at Fort Bliss, Texas.

The new AFSFC curriculum relies less on lecture-based training in favor of a field exercise-based learning environment that features more weapons firing and engagement events. AFSFC developed the courses in response to the Air Force's Defender Next-32 Initiative, directed by USAF Security Forces to come up with a more challenging and realistic training curriculum for Defenders.

"ACDC replaces Tier Training as the pre-deployment course for most U.S. Air Forces Central Command security

forces deployers," said Lt. Col. Christopher Thomas, AFSFC Det. 3 commander. "It's designed to be more challenging and more focused on the individual and team skills of shoot, move and communicate ... what Defenders need to be prepared for deployment."

ACDC, a two-week course taught by a cadre of instructors at the training center, graduated its first class of 72 Defenders in January. The four-week MFRT graduated 122 Defenders on Feb. 3.

Both courses are currently undergoing validation at Desert Defender, which requires three classes of students to graduate before certification. During this time, students and instructors provide feedback to AFSFC. Data collected is being used to make improvements to the curriculum.

"AFIMSC and the Air Force Security Forces Center are committed to furthering the objectives of Defender Next-32," said Aaron Guill, AFSFC commander. "As such, our mission is to seek those new and innovative solutions that will give Security Forces across the Total Force a decisive advantage over our adversaries, both domestic and abroad."



# RANDOLPH

## Air Force Thunderbirds certified for 2022 season

By Senior Airman Breanna Carter

AIR FORCE THUNDERBIRDS

The United States Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron, known as the “Thunderbirds,” recently completed their certification for the 2022 show season.

The Air Force Thunderbirds will be featured performers during the Great Texas Airshow at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph April 23-24. The free show begins at 11 a.m. and wraps up at 4:30 p.m. each day.

Gen. Mark Kelly, commander of Air Combat Command, certified the Thunderbirds after a rigorous four-month training season. This certification ensures the safety of the team and the maneuvers.

“The experience gained through the new training syllabus and training trip ... it shows,” Kelly said. “I am proud to announce the official certification of the Thunderbirds for the 2022 season.”

Beginning in 2020, the team adopted a driven “accelerate change or lose” mentality, culminating in significant improvements to the demonstration and the training syllabus.

The 2022 team executed the new training syllabus for the first time this year, exercising all parts of the team — logistics, maintenance, public affairs, and show center operations — at multiple training sites, including its first full six-ship show, complete with music and narration.

The new training syllabus, combined with training at multiple deployed locations, allowed the team to reach their 50th practice show on March 10, approximately 25 full practice shows ahead of schedule.

“This is a culmination of all of our hard work through an unprecedented winter training deployment and today’s certification demonstration would not have been possible if we hadn’t seen similar challenging situations in Spaceport and Fort Huachuca,” said Lt. Col. Justin Elliott, Thunderbirds commander/leader. “From a whole-team perspective, this is the most prepared Thunderbirds squadron in generations.

“We have to continue driving forward from here; to continue building on this team’s 68.5 years of excellence in the name of service to something greater than ourselves.”



STAFF SGT. ANDREW SARVER

*The United States Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron “Thunderbirds” perform their demonstration at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, March 10. After a long hiatus, the 2022 Great Texas Airshow will take place at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph April 23-24. The free show, which highlights the “Thunderbirds,” begins at 11 a.m. and wraps up at 4:30 p.m. each day.*

# Air Force plans demos, performances for Air Force Day at the Alamo April 2

By Capt. Kenya Pettway

AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Air Education and Training Command officials will hold the annual Air Force Day at the Alamo from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 2, 2022, at the Alamo Plaza in downtown San Antonio.

The event is free and open to the public and will feature demonstrations and performances by Joint Base San Antonio units including the Military Working Dogs Demo Team; Explosive Ordnance Detachment Demo Team; JBSA-Lackland Drum & Bugle Corps; and the United States Air Force Band of the West.

The event, held each year during Fiesta, celebrates the Air Force's enduring and centuries-long partnership with leaders from across Military City USA.

"Training has been a central part of the military mission in San Antonio

since the community donated 90 acres of land to construct the historic quadrangle at Fort Sam Houston in 1870," said Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, AETC commander. "From basic military training to medical, technical, cyber, and flying training, hundreds of thousands of men and women who wear our nation's uniform have come through San Antonio on their journey of serving our nation. The success of our mission is certain because of the unwavering support provided by Military City USA."

Fiesta celebrations date back to 1891 when horse-drawn carriages circled Alamo Plaza and participants pelted each other with flowers. Today's Fiesta San Antonio has grown into an 11-day celebration of diverse heritage, cultures and traditions.

For more information on the Air Force Day at the Alamo event, contact the Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs office by email at [aetc.pao@us.af.mil](mailto:aetc.pao@us.af.mil); or by phone at 210-652-4400.



ANDREW PATTERSON

*The Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Drum and Bugle Corps, comprised of JBSA-Lackland basic military trainees who have been in the Air Force less than eight weeks, perform during Air Force Day at the Alamo April 24, 2017. Air Education and Training Command officials will hold the annual Air Force Day at the Alamo from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 2 at the Alamo Plaza in downtown San Antonio.*

## Air Force Wounded Warrior Outreach and Ambassador Program spreads awareness

By Shannon Hall

AIR FORCE WOUNDED WARRIOR PROGRAM

Take a moment to think about your favorite outfit, the computer or phone you are using, your favorite restaurant or coffee shop and some of the décor in your house. For most things we adore and surround our lives with, we heard about it from someone else.

This could have been on television, an advertisement on social media or word of mouth from a friend. When you hear someone talk about something they like so much, you have a tendency to look into it and see what it is all about. That is the benefit of having the Air Force Wounded Warrior, or AFW2, Outreach and Ambassador Program.

The Outreach and Ambassador Program was implemented in 2016 when a staff member, who was also a Wounded Warrior in the program, saw the need to spread awareness about AFW2 and all they do for Airmen and now Guardians. What better way to do that than hearing from those who have been directly benefited and affected by the program?

"The Outreach and Ambassador



SHANNON HALL

*The Outreach and Ambassador Program was implemented in 2016 when a staff member, who was also a Wounded Warrior in the program, saw the need to spread awareness about AFW2 and all that they do for Airmen and now Guardians.*

Program exists to close the gap of awareness among the Air Force and Space Force personnel," said Melissa Wiest, Outreach and Ambassador Program manager. "It serves as a marketing tool to educate Airmen and Guardians on the resources needed to help Warriors adjust to their new normal."

One of the best ways to spread

awareness of the AFW2 program is by word of mouth from those who live it every day. For this reason, the Outreach and Ambassador Program is in charge of setting up briefings at all Air and Space Force installations across the world. This is the best way to bring the reality of the trauma the Warriors have faced and the strength they have to continue to those who don't walk in their shoes or understand their struggles.

"Providing an AFW2 program overview coupled with an Ambassador's testimony of tragedy, recovery and resiliency to audiences makes a strong, positive impact within the Air Force culture and spreads awareness of the AFW2 program and all of the services provided," Wiest said.

AFW2 staff members can brag and promote the good the program does all day, but it can be hard to understand the full impact of the services provided without hearing from a Warrior about their Recovery Care Coordinator fixing their pay, or the Community Program team getting them connected to other Warriors in their community.

These stories highlight areas where AFW2 helped strengthen their resume to help them get their dream job after working with the Empowerment in Transition team or being able to feel the wind in their hair after they joined Adaptive Sports and can get back on the track.

"Our Ambassadors are important because they are able to put a face and story to recovery, and show that difficulties in life can be overcome," said Col. Richard Obert, AFW2 director. "Hearing these stories should be a top priority for all of our Airmen and Guardians."

With the ever-changing COVID-19 environment, the Outreach and Ambassador team can travel to some locations and they also conduct briefings virtually. To get on their schedule send a request to their email at [AFPC.DPPFW.AmbassadorWorkflow@us.af.mil](mailto:AFPC.DPPFW.AmbassadorWorkflow@us.af.mil).

To learn more about the Outreach and Ambassador Program, along with all the other services AFW2 offers, or to refer an Airman or Guardian, visit the website at [www.woundedwarrior.af.mil](http://www.woundedwarrior.af.mil).